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5 February 1964

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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Approved For Release 2003/03/10 : CIA-RDP79T00975A007500070001-1

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South Vietnam: Viet Cong activity continues gradually to intensify.

Although about 70 percent of reported Communist activity consists of incidents of a harassing nature, the number of armed attacks has shown a slowly rising trend. Yesterday's reported large-scale attack against the headquarters of a government battalion in the delta would be, if confirmed, the fourth battalion-strength Viet Cong action since 1 January.

Viet Cong tactics suggest greater self-confidence. In the past few weeks, they have greatly stepped up the number of ambushes of regular army units, cut numerous telephone and electric power lines, and shelled or raided close to provincial and district capitals.

In government-held areas of the central and northern coast, they have also entered a number of strategic hamlets, terrorized inhabitants, and kidnaped hamlet officials.

There is no indication that Viet Cong military activity has greatly increased since the 30 January coup in Saigon, but the Communists can be expected to try to exploit any dislocations or confusions resulting from the latest changeover.

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Nationalist China: [Chinese Nationalist authorities have indicated concern that the morale of their armed forces and people shows some signs of declining.]

[In late January a high-ranking officer, while speaking before assembled troops, criticized high-level Nationalist officials and called for a change of government. An island-wide civil and military police alert and a news blackout followed.]

[A US military advisory group study had earlier indicated that morale was probably declining among the mainlander elements of the military. Their discouragement was attributed primarily to poor pay and living conditions rather than to the deterioration of Taipei's international position.]

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Thailand: [Key military leaders are reported to be planning an early coup against Prime Minister Thanom Kittikachorn's government.]

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[Although transfer of the premiership to General Thanom was accomplished smoothly, maneuvering among the top military leadership has continued. The ruling military group had reportedly agreed on Thanom only as head of a provisional caretaker government.]

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Ghana: Nkrumah apparently remains in control despite a seemingly abnormal concentration of troops near his residence a few days ago.

Nkrumah's 3 February broadcast, acknowledging his sweeping "victory" in the recent controlled referendum, contained nothing to substantiate rumors circulating in Accra since last week end which suggests that disaffected army leaders had placed him under some kind of constraint.

The speech was in effect a militant reiteration of his determination to move Ghana rapidly along the path to "socialism" within a Communist-style domestic framework.

Nkrumah pointedly declared that "rumor mongers" would be "smoked out" along with all internal and external "conspirators" against his regime.

He stated that the civil service and unnamed "state enterprises" would be entrusted only to "reliable hands" --suggesting that these areas may be next to undergo a purge of moderates or a heavy infusion of leftists. The civil service and many government corporations are still largely staffed by moderates.

The regime-staged demonstration outside the US Embassy yesterday reflects Nkrumah's continuing belief that the US is his principal "imperialist" foe and may presage new action to curtail American presence in Ghana. Last week end three US nationals serving on the faculty of Ghana's main university were served with deportation orders.

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USSR-Cuba: (The Soviets are reported to have established an "Astrophysics Center" in Havana for tracking space vehicles)

[redacted] the station is operating and using "very advanced" equipment.]

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(The type of tracking involved is not known, but if it is electronic it would substantially assist Soviet space operations, such as deep space probes. Although construction is reported to be continuing, there is no evidence of the existence of a large antenna which would be required for an electronic system.)

(An optical tracking capability, while not as crucial to Soviet needs, would still be useful.)

(The Soviets in the past have tracked and monitored space operations with land-based facilities in the Soviet Union and with ships at sea.)

(They also have attempted to establish a station in Indonesia to monitor transmissions from satellites. Equipment for the station was delivered by March 1963, but Djakarta has not yet permitted the station to begin operating.)

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Spain - Soviet Bloc: (Spain may soon establish relations with Czechoslovakia as a possible first step toward closer trade and diplomatic ties with the Soviet bloc.)

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(For a number of years Spain has been trading on a semiofficial basis with Czechoslovakia and most of the other European satellites. [redacted])

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[redacted] believes that Czechoslovakia, Poland, and one other bloc nation will probably be permitted to open trade offices in the Spanish capital in the near future.)

(These steps could foreshadow Spanish recognition of the USSR. Although there has been opposition in the cabinet to the establishment of diplomatic relations with Moscow, one major obstacle apparently has been removed.)

(Spanish officials recently indicated that Madrid no longer makes recognition contingent on repayment of the \$570 million of gold which the Spanish Republican government sent to the USSR during the civil war in Spain.) [redacted]

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Ceylon: The Bandaranaike government is increasingly threatened by Ceylon's deteriorating economic situation.

Foreign exchange reserves reportedly have dwindled to less than a month's requirement--an all-time low. Workers are pressing the government to discard its longstanding policy of wage restraint. In addition, urban unemployment continues to rise.

Opposition parties are stepping up their efforts to bring down the government by stimulating public agitation and attempting to promote defections from Mrs. Bandaranaike's governing Sri Lanka Freedom Party.

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NOTES

Syria: Continuing factionalism within the Syrian Baath party is seriously endangering Baath control of the government. Former Premier Bitar, a long-time party leader, has been ousted from the party, and a move also appears to be under way to remove party founder Aflaq. A similar situation prevailed in Iraq last November, when the Baath split into warring factions and the army took over.

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Saudi Arabia - Egypt: Saudi Arabia and Egypt appear to be moving closer to an accommodation. Saudi Arabia has announced that it will restore diplomatic relations with Cairo provided the two countries' representatives meet in the presence of Iraqi and Algerian mediators to settle "all their outstanding problems." Both Crown Prince Faysal and Nasir have specifically indicated that they would welcome an opportunity to settle the Yemen problem.

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